

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 1416

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK

SUBJECT: DPC MEETING MARCH 14; NATO PRESS RELEASE ON UK DEFENSE REVIEW

REF: USNATO 1384 (NOTAL)

DPC MET MARCH 14 TO APPROVE DRAFT TEXT OF NATO PRESS RELEASE ON UK DEFENSE REVIEW (REFTEL) WITH TWO MINOR CHANGES. DPC DROPPED PARAGRAPH 2 LINE 4 PHRASE "LAND AND AIR" TO AVOID AMBIGUITY RELATING TO MBFR, AND CHANGED PARAGRAPH 5 LINE 4 "OFFSET" TO "ALLEVIATE." NATO PRESS SERVICE WILL RELEASE NATO VIEWS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH RELEASE OF UK WHITE PAPER AT 11 A.M. MARCH 19. FINAL APPROVED TEXT FOLLOWS. BEGIN TEXT:

CHANGES IN UK DEFENCE PROGRAMME - NATO VIEWS

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE USUAL NATO PRACTICE, THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT, HAVING REACHED PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS ON THEIR DEFENCE REVIEW, INITIATED THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR NATO ALLIES IN DECEMBER 1974. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGES PROPOSED HAVE BEEN ASSESSED BY THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES AND THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EXCHANGES OF VIEWS IN THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE ALLIANCE. THESE TOOK PLACE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A STATEMENT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REGARDED THEIR

PLAN TO REDUCE DEFENCE EXPENDITURE TO 4 1/2 PER CENT OF GNP BY THE MID-1980S AS A FIRM DECISION.

2. AS A RESULT, THE ALLIANCE WELCOMES THE ASSURANCE THAT NATO COMMITMENTS REMAIN THE FIRST CHARGE ON BRITISH DEFENCE RESOURCES; THAT NO REDUCTIONS ARE ENVISAGED IN ADVANCE OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT IN THE FORCES DEPLOYED IN THE CENTRAL

REGION; AND THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL MAINTAIN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS PRESENT STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR CONTRIBUTION TO NATO.

3. THE ALLIANCE HAS NEVERTHELESS EXPRESSED ITS DISQUIET AT THE SCALE OF THE REDUCTIONS PROPOSED AND THEIR EFFECT ON NATO'S CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE VIS-A-VIS THE INCREASING CAPABILITY OF THE WARSAW PACT. THE CHANGES OF SPECIAL CONCERN ARE: THE REDUCTION OF REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITY IN THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN REGIONS; THE REMOVAL OF NAVAL AND AIR FORCES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA; AND THE DECLINE IN MARITIME CAPABILITIES IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC AND CHANNEL AREAS.

4. THE ALLIANCE IS PLEASED TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT IN RESPONSE TO ITS REPRESENTATIONS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE ANNOUNCED IN TODAY'S WHITE PAPER THEIR WILLINGNESS TO INTRODUCE CERTAIN COMPENSATORY MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE THE MORE DAMAGING FEATURES OF THE PROPOSALS, ALTHOUGH THE TOTAL RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO DEFENCE WILL NOT BE INCREASED. IT ATTACHES PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE UNDERTAKINGS TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN NATO MARITIME EXERCISES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND TO MAINTAIN CERTAIN REINFORCEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE SOUTHERN REGION. IT ALSO ACCEPTS THE BRITISH OFFER TO CONTINUE ALLIED CONSULTATION ABOUT OTHER MEASURES AIMED AT MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE REDUCTIONS.

5. THE ALLIANCE HAS URGED THE UNITED KINGDOM TO KEEP ITS NEW PROGRAMME UNDER REVIEW, IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS ALLIES AND IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SECURITY
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SITUATION AS THEY ARISE. IT HOPES THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO JUDGE THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THEIR MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO NATO NOT IN FINANCIAL TERMS ALONE, BUT IN TERMS OF ITS TOTAL VALUE TO DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE THROUGHOUT THE ALLIANCE.

END TEXT.MCAULIFFE

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